

General Lib
Sims Hall fund
Faxon
2-12-52
Vol. 9, #2-4

COMMENTARY

THE U.N. TANGLE OVER JERUSALEM

Prospects for a Settlement

HAL LEHRMAN

BEHIND closely guarded walls somewhere in the broad but sparsely populated territories knit together by King Abdullah's British-trained Arab Legion, emissaries of Jordan and Israel are currently parleying for a treaty of peace. With the white-bearded Hashemite monarch in alert attendance on each occasion, the negotiators have already met six times, and every meeting has recorded progress toward a pact—the first to be achieved between the new Jewish state and any of the

angry Arab neighbors ranged along its borders.

The rest of the world has more at stake in these talks than merely a formal cessation of armed hostility between two small countries in the far-off Middle East. The parleys, by all present tokens, are likely to shape the foundations for the final settlement of a crisis in which the hopes of three world religions—Moslem, Christian, Jewish—and the prestige of the United Nations are vastly involved: the struggle over the internationalization of the Holy City of Jerusalem.

A United Nations plan has been prepared for international control of Jerusalem's shrines without destroying the sovereignty of Israel and Jordan in the city they now share. There is every indication that the two states, once they have resolved their differences elsewhere, or even if they cannot, will set up a common front and negotiate a UN agreement based on this plan. Two facts give this serene vista a most sardonic tinge: the General Assembly's December resolution for complete internationalization is being discarded virtually *in toto* by the new UN plan that is supposed to implement it; and peace seems about to descend on Jerusalem only because this same new plan—or a negotiated rewriting of it—will satisfy the requirements of Israel and Jordan, whose feelings and wishes appeared entirely non-essential to the UN just a few weeks ago.

THE UN decision to internationalize the city of Jerusalem, which called forth prompt and vigorous reactions from Israel and Jordan, appeared to reopen a bitter controversy; but, paradoxically, the vote for internationalization may have had the effect of mobilizing forces that will eventually bring about a more equitable solution. HAL LEHRMAN here analyzes the political character of the problem and reports on the probable outcome of the latest and most complex chapter in the history of the new state. Mr. Lehrman has followed the Palestine situation for COMMENTARY through its vicissitudes of the past few years, and has won a wide reputation for reliability and objectivity. At present, in addition to his journalistic activities, Mr. Lehrman is lecturing before Jewish and other groups around the country on current international affairs as well as the problems of Israel and their impact on American Jewry. He was born in New York City in 1911 and studied at Cornell University.

ON DECEMBER 9, by a crushing majority of nearly three-fourths, the Assembly at Lake Success passed a resolution ignoring two years of bloody conflict in Palestine and resurrecting the internationalized Jerusalem envisaged in the original partition scheme of November 29, 1947. UN rule was proclaimed for the city proper and a generous belt of suburbs including Bethlehem. This whole area was to be designated as a "*corpus separatum*"—aptly Latin, for the Vatican had played a major role in the Assembly vote and the resolution had been introduced by an Australian Labor government anxious for Catholic support in a national election then impending. The Vatican-approved Australian resolution was made further notable by friendly Soviet amendments and Arab League endorsements, the most extraordinary three-way UN coalition in that body's history.

As passed, the resolution called for the completion of a "Statute of Jerusalem" left over from partition days. The Assembly expressed vague interest in a "democratization" of the rules under which the local populations were to live, but left little room for effective self-government and no room at all for Israeli and Jordan sovereignty. Named as the administrative arm of the UN in Jerusalem, the Trusteeship Council was sternly exhorted to refurbish the statute and put it straightway into effect.

Now there are several grave omissions in these firm instructions. The Trusteeship Council is told to go ahead and govern, but is not told how and with what. It is not advised where the money and personnel are coming from to support an international regime against the apparently solid opposition of one hundred thousand local Jewish residents, to say nothing of the Arabs in Jerusalem. Most particularly, the Council receives no clue as to where to begin looking for the large international police force—or army—possibly needed in view of vigorous Israeli and Hashemite pledges never to yield their respective halves of the city.

The Assembly failed to inform the Council on these matters because the Assembly had not the smallest idea. Spurred by the

piety in the pre-Christmas air, the fatigue of a long agenda, and the persuasions of the Vatican, the Assembly simply stampeded itself into voting an unimplementable "solution" of the Jerusalem problem, passed the buck to the Council, and departed.

THE Council, being composed of realistic men deliberating in an atmosphere of less haste and pressure than the Assembly, and required to devise a scheme that would not only look impressive in print but also work, has accommodated itself to the realities. After discreet consultations with spokesmen of the involved parties, including the Church, Council president Roger Garreau of France—which voted for the Assembly resolution—has produced a plan whose sole important resemblance to the resolution is that it pertains to Jerusalem and proposes to internationalize the Holy Places.

Instead of a sprawling "*corpus separatum*" of seventy-four square miles, the Garreau plan restricts the UN zone to two modest enclaves. One would encompass the Wailing Wall, the Christian Holy Places in the Old City and on Mount Zion, two narrow prongs of ground to the north, and a half-mile wedge into the New City enclosing the YMCA and the King David Hotel (the latter presumably for the private solace of future UN administrators). The other enclave would contain the territory around Mount Scopus and the Mount of Olives, inclusively. The road linking these enclaves through Mount Scopus, and the southerly road to Bethlehem, are to be internationalized, as is Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity. Everything else in the Jerusalem area is to be *ceded* outright to the Israeli or Jordan authority whose armed forces are now in occupation.

A preliminary Garreau draft demilitarized the whole Jerusalem area. But account had to be taken of Israeli apprehensiveness as to the fate of an open city in the event of renewed Arab assault. Therefore the region is now only to be *neutralized*, an important difference. This bars use of the city as a military base in case of renewed Arab-Israeli

war, but it permits the quartering of troops and their employment in defense of Jerusalem if attacked.

A single economy is to be established for the two sides of the city, with a common currency and free mutual access of pilgrims, officials, residents, and goods. The UN Governor will supervise the international zone and maintenance of its Holy Places. He will oversee the execution of the reciprocal guarantees for neutralization and free movement. In all other matters respecting their territories, Jordan and Israel will be sovereign.

INITIALLY, the Trusteeship Council asked Garreau to have his plan in time for the Council's reopening at Geneva in mid-January. The plan was ready, but when the Geneva meeting convened the first item on the agenda—good for several weeks of time consumption—was the Italian colonies, not Jerusalem. It seemed highly probable that all parties were waiting out the Israeli-Jordan treaty talks, in order to give a Jerusalem settlement its largest possible chances for success.

Those chances, at the moment, look very good to persons in a position to make predictions about the unpredictable UN with minimum risk of being made foolish by events. Estimating *present* moods and probabilities, the likelihoods are as follows:

1. The Trusteeship Council, aware that it can get off the hook only by a violent wrench away from the Assembly's futile resolution, will solemnly pretend that the Garreau plan (or a revision of it worked out among all elements concerned) is an implementation of the Assembly's wishes.

2. The Vatican, having won a thumping theoretical victory in the Assembly, will content itself with the best practical arrangements it can get for control of the Holy Places—thereby facilitating a final decision in the Trusteeship Council and sidestepping a return of the dispute to a new Assembly.

3. Israel, which indicated its readiness to accept direct UN control of the Holy Places even before the Assembly vote, will be willing to settle for a UN zone that will dimin-

ish her sovereignty only a little more than such control.

4. Abdullah will be happy to yield a few minor segments of territory in exchange for the huge prestige accruing from recognition of his sovereign status in Arab Jerusalem.

5. Britain will be happy at the prospect of enhancing her own shaky position in the Middle East through extension of Abdullah's legally acknowledged authority.

6. The United States, relieved to see the Jerusalem chapter closed at minimum cost and friction, will support any plan acceptable to the Vatican, Jordan, and Israel.

7. The Soviet and Arab blocs will roar with pain, but their two votes out of twelve in the Trusteeship Council will not avail to plunge the UN back into the dilemma of all-or-nothing internationalization.

A glance behind the scenes of recent and current developments in the Jerusalem story may serve to illuminate the future.

ON reliable authority this writer learns that the iron chain of events which inexorably led the General Assembly to decree a Jerusalem solution that nobody in the world knew how to enforce began to be forged when, at an early and crucial moment, a Mexican delegate missed an obscure subcommittee meeting.

A seventeen-nation subcommittee of the Special Political Committee had been invited to compose a workable plan for recommendation by the Committee to the Assembly. This plan was to be distilled from a long list of conflicting plans, at the chronological top of which stood Australia's proposal for total internationalization. Nearly everyone realized the Australian project would not do. A motion was offered to suspend its priority, enabling the subcommittee to try blending various proposals into a *new* and *practical* scheme. But the motion lost by one vote—the unfortunate absent Mexican's, which would have favorably broken a 7-7 tie. Automatically, the Australian project had to come up next. Compelled now to declare themselves on a matter of Catholic principle, delegates sensitive to the Vatican felt they

could vote only yes. The Australian measure won.

Having approved one plan, what was the point in discussing any other? So the subcommittee went home. In due course its report reached the Special Political Committee, which, functioning under the same inhibitions about the Vatican, also said yes, 35 to 13. If the vote had been secret, certain delegates admitted, they would have said no. The Swedes, who did say no anyway, expressed openly the general bafflement which others were feeling covertly: "We have always maintained," declared the Swedes plaintively, "that some measure of agreement ought to be forthcoming from the parties most intimately affected." Two days later, the Assembly, its eyes tightly shut, went down the same dead end, 38 to 14.

The Assembly could blandly instruct the Trusteeship Council not to allow anything "to divert it from adopting and implementing" a statute for Jerusalem, but the Council found itself incapable of doing so in its very first test. Ordering Israel to cease and desist from making Jerusalem into a capital, it mustered only five votes—the Council's seven other members abstaining. The USSR, interested only in beating Abdullah about the ears, abstained. The British and the Americans, whose two negative votes in the Assembly had been just two votes but who now became all-important because they possessed the UN's major resources for any implementing, also abstained. The Chinese delegate, with far-off headaches of his own, abstained. Even the Australian, rapped on the knuckles by a new government back home that was less interested in Catholic votes, abstained. It quickly occurred to Council chairman Garreau that the one way out might be a statute that would get acceptance *inside Jerusalem* by bypassing the Assembly's resolution in effect while suavely pretending to respect it.

If the Garreau plan comes formally before the Trusteeship Council, the Soviet member is likely to object—and rightly—that it nullifies the Assembly's decision. The only Arab member, Iraq, will most likely do the same.

Should the view of these two prevail, the whole muddle would have to be tossed back at the Assembly again. But will it? Two Latin delegations—Catholics, as it happens—the Dominican in the Council and the Argentine outside it, have lately been suggesting to the Israelis how agreeable it would be to settle for a plan along the Garreau lines. Moreover, although the Garreau project was quite plainly published in the *New York Times*, it has up to now drawn not the faintest objection from the Vatican.

MEEK Assembly acceptance of the Australian resolution had impressively demonstrated the Church's political power. Nobody had believed the resolution would survive even the Special Political Committee—until the Vatican ordered its diplomatic representatives abroad to call on the foreign ministers of their accredited governments. The result was instantaneous and startling. Delegates changed overnight, almost in the middle of their flights of oratory, from fighting the resolution to supporting it.

It is estimated that at least a dozen votes went over, solidifying a bloc of seventeen Catholic states. What makes this show of Church strength doubly impressive is the fact that the "converted" delegates were aware they were voting for a political impossibility.

The victory, however, was limited. Apparently none knew this better than the Church. True, the official Vatican radio had intimated a belief that the Australian project promised "real and effective internationalization," and a few days after the vote Vatican officials were expressing concern over "Israel's defiant attitude"—as if the latter were a complete surprise to them. But the Curia knew how to assess its gains. The Assembly's action had enhanced the Vatican's bargaining power on Jerusalem, reinforced the Church's moral ground, given the advocates of internationalization the comfort of international endorsement, and improved their public relations position vis-à-vis the Israelis. But, short of dispatching the Pope's own Swiss Guard, they had nothing with which to implement the resolution. It gave

them an authoritative piece of paper at Lake Success, but not one added jot of effective power in Jerusalem.

Vatican realism, therefore, dictated a retreat from victorious non-compromise in the Assembly to hard-headed dickering for the best possible terms in practice. This realism seems to be the Trusteeship Council's best hope. It is enormously significant that Garreau conferred with Cardinal Spellman before the French plan's publication in the *Times*. (Bizarrely, details had leaked out a few days earlier to the *Jewish Day* and the *Morning Journal*, but one must assume the Vatican does not closely watch the New York Yiddish press.) Officially, the Cardinal referred Garreau to the Papal Secretariat of State for comment, but unofficially, it is understood, he intimated that the plan might well become a basis for parleying with the Vatican. Further evidence came soon after in a brief news item from Jerusalem. Herein it was disclosed that the Apostolic Delegate to the Holy City, Archbishop Gustavo Testa, had brought the Pope's greetings in person to none other than King Abdullah—and reportedly discussed with that monarch "a new French plan" for Jerusalem.

IN VIEW of the Vatican's brilliant performance at the Assembly, Abdullah has probably begun to appreciate the importance of the Church as a factor in the situation. Abdullah's friendly enemy, the government of Israel, was not that astute. Israeli spokesmen now frankly admit the Vatican caught them far off base.

Troubled by evidence that reports of Israel's alleged mistreatment of minorities were Catholic-inspired, Tel Aviv did make efforts early last year to conciliate the Church by arrangements for the restoration and repair of Catholic sanctuaries. But by last summer it became clear that the Vatican was advancing from propaganda to direct diplomatic action. In fact, a special Vatican representative on matters of "Near Eastern welfare," Mgr. Thomas J. MacMahon of New York, who is also a close associate of Cardinal Spellman, virtually announced to Prime

Minister David Ben Gurion in a stormy August interview that Tel Aviv might expect the strongest opposition from the Church in the struggle for Jerusalem.

Making a few exploratory steps to forestall a possible diplomatic line-up of Catholic states, the Israeli Foreign Ministry was encouraged by its findings. The French, in particular, looked friendly. Then top Israeli observers returned home from the United States with assurances that, come what may, the Church could never overcome an Anglo-American coalition and get the necessary two-thirds vote to push an unworkable scheme for total internationalization through the General Assembly. This convinced Moshe Sharett, and ultimately Ben Gurion, too.

From then on the Israeli government behaved as if Jerusalem were safe and secure. When the Assembly convened, Jerusalem stood far down on a long agenda, and the confident Sharett therefore delayed coming to New York until a few days before the dispute reached the floor. Soundings of official foreign opinion by Israeli diplomats abroad were considered unnecessary, as was lobbying by Israeli delegates at Lake Success. When debate started, messages to Tel Aviv, from Israeli delegates and correspondents, were glowingly optimistic. The delegation cabled that a two-thirds majority for the Australian resolution was out of the question because the resolution was too extreme. Light dawned only when the Special Political Committee, which operates by simple majority, gave the resolution better than two-thirds. To be fair, it must be stressed that this surprised everybody, not only Israeli delegates. But by then it was too late.

HAVING been lulled by false expectations, outraged Israel reacted with double indignation when the bad news broke.

The Jerusalem City Council solemnly resolved never to separate itself from Israel. The Mayor, Daniel Auster, was quoted as swearing that internationalization could proceed "only over our dead bodies." Ten thousand Jerusalemites, led by their chief rabbis, marched in procession out of the

city to the fresh grave of Theodor Herzl and there pledged the awful Psalmist oath: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." On Tel Aviv walls appeared mimeographed appeals for disobedience and threats of assault against all agents of the UN edict. The posted handbills bore the signature: "The Men of the Freedom of Jerusalem"—ominously reminiscent of the "Fighters for the Freedom of Israel," the Stern Gang of the mandate and the Arab war. The still unsolved murder of another UN official on a less repugnant mission, the Swedish mediator Count Folke Bernadotte, came grimly back to mind. Old-style terrorism could hardly return on Israeli territory, where every police and army officer was likely to be a graduate of the underground himself and hence as aware as any potential terrorist of the members and methods of a revived underground. But if Jerusalem were made "independent," if Israel's government were relieved of the right and duty to maintain order, who would be left to restrain the hotheads, and who could say how many thousands of youths from Jerusalem and elsewhere would not be ready to stake their lives for the redemption of Israel's ancient capital?

To this writer—as to all Zionist, most non-Zionist, and even much non-Jewish opinion here and abroad—the Assembly's brand of internationalization seems quite indefensible on moral, political, religious, and, above all, practical grounds. It may not be "just about the worst blunder committed by the UN," as one commentator has suggested, but there can be little argument with the New York *Herald Tribune's* editorial view that "stability in Palestine scarcely seems likely if the UN persists in an outdated plan of setting up a third state in a country barely large enough for two."

When the Tel Aviv government denounced the UN decision, it only expressed what was in the Israeli people's hearts and minds and what was borne out by the facts. Ninety-five per cent of the New City's population is Jewish. The UN itself permitted its 1947 internationalization of Jeru-

salem, as part of Palestine's partition, to become a dead letter by failing to aid or neutralize the Holy City during the Arab-Jewish war. The Jews alone defended Jerusalem, at considerable loss of life. Israel alone helped the people of Jerusalem and, with their full consent, saved them from postwar inanition by integrating their city in Israel's own political, economic, and social structure. Both morally and physically, internationalization could not be enforced against the wishes of the local population. Moreover, Israel had been, and continued to be, ready to negotiate for full international protection of the Holy Places with the UN, whose main interest as spokesman of the world community, after all, hardly seemed extendable beyond those Holy Places.

Nonetheless, many in this country—and among the more reflective sections of the Israeli public—privately deplored the tone and content of the official Tel Aviv reaction. It was not that the government lacked provocation for its utterances, but rather that the utterances seemed unnecessary and even partly incorrect—and therefore a shade unstatesmanlike, if not positively harmful to Israel's common cause.

FOR one thing, although a Ben Gurion declaration concerning physical transfer of government offices was distorted by headline-writers and did not actually proclaim Jerusalem as a *new* capital, it did give the impression that Israel was suddenly doing just that. This was wrong on two counts: the movement of official bureaus from Tel Aviv was simply the continuation of an old process—and Jerusalem, though always regarded spiritually and traditionally as *the* capital, could not yet become a capital in full and practical effect. As long as the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, and Defense remained in Tel Aviv, Israel at most would merely have two "semi-capitals." A calm, dignified pursuance of already established policy on the transfer of lesser offices to Jerusalem along with the Knesset would have obtained all the advantages of a *fait accompli* without unnecessarily tweaking the beard of

the UN, which, at least nominally, represents world opinion. The Knesset's subsequent proclamation that Jerusalem had resumed the status of a capital from the moment of Israel's rebirth, gratuitously reaffirmed a legalism. It failed to add anything substantial to Israel's already strong case.

For the man in the world's streets Tel Aviv's fulminations made it appear that the argument was strictly between the world and Israel. But Jordan really should have been much more involved. According to Ottoman and British mandate catalogues, *all* the Holy Places are in Abdullah-held territory. Even on a special Vatican list a mere five per cent of the sites—the shrines on Mt. Zion—are in Israeli territory. Yet Abdullah let the Israelis do all the shouting. Having already warned Lake Success that his portion of Jerusalem would not be surrendered, he did allow the Arabic press in the Old City and the Arabic radio at Ramallah to rant against the UN's decision and the Arab League's support of it; but, advised by the British to keep silent, he permitted Israel's leaders the exclusive satisfaction of repeatedly hurling official defiances.

Indeed, Ben Gurion went so far as to get himself quoted in an Associated Press dispatch to the effect that "Israel is aligned against the whole world." Now even if this were true, it would not seem wise for a prime minister to insist on it. But it was not true, various governments, including the American, having voted against the Assembly's decision, and many more since then showing marked apathy about its application.

Israeli spokesmen might have foregone the fireworks and relied on the strength of the Jewish position in Jerusalem and the impotence of any internationalizing agency. There appears, however, to be an invigorating snap in the bright air of young Israel that impels her leaders to sound off at home with an abandon they judiciously restrain abroad. Israeli speeches at Lake Success are generally models of style, logic, and controlled emotion. In the Knesset and elsewhere in Israel, however, some statesmen hold forth as if nobody were listening outside the doors.

Even as seasoned a hand as Sharett slips occasionally. It is reported that he earnestly cabled Ben Gurion from Lake Success to be more prudent after the "Israel-against-the-world" statement; but no sooner was he home himself than the Foreign Minister committed the greater enormity of notifying the Knesset that the Church was seeking to avenge "an ancient sin and settle an account of nineteen centuries' standing"—thereby seemingly accepting on behalf of all Jews a responsibility they had never before seriously considered theirs. The net result of such talk could only be to alienate a little more good will abroad.

IN CONTRAST, a policy of conserving "good will" has been commendably followed with Jordan. Israel has wisely refrained from any official comment on the Garreau plan so as not to jeopardize her talks with Abdullah by seeming to negotiate behind his back. A further reason for caution may well have been Israeli awareness that Garreau's focusing of belated UN attention on essentials—the Holy Places—would put Abdullah more and more on the spot, a pleasant prospect which ought not to be disturbed by premature Israeli pronouncements.

At this writing, meanwhile, this correspondent understands that only one issue remains outstanding for a complete Israeli-Jordan settlement. There will be reciprocal access to Jerusalem through Arab-held Latrun and over the Israeli-held Bethlehem road. A general territorial accord will be based approximately on the armistice lines. Both parties respect each other's interest in Jerusalem and will make common cause against undue extensions of UN control. They will try to restrict international rule to the Holy Places, without overlapping on secular ground. If this fails, their effort will be to squeeze the UN's enclave as narrow as possible (and each, undoubtedly, will be more amenable to concessions at the other's expense than its own). If necessary, the Israelis may be prepared to yield Mount Zion, with the Church of the Dormition and the Tomb of David—claimed by Christians

as the Cenacle, reputed site of the Last Supper—and also admit UN authority over the Government House area between the Old and New Cities, where the Arabs now hold more than the Jews. A possible arrangement is envisaged similar to that of the Vatican in Rome, with sovereign rights for the UN inside a zone of Holy Places and extra-territorial rights over certain points “beyond the walls.”

Israel accepts the principle that Abdullah is entitled to some sort of corridor to Gaza. But does this mean simply the right of passage over Israeli territory, or will the corridor legally divide Israel in two? Is the corridor to be just the few yards' width of the actual road or a broad strip of land amounting to a territorial cession? This is the tough haggling point that still blocks a meeting of the minds on an over-all treaty. (There is also the problem of Gaza itself, now occupied by Egypt—but the Israelis are letting Abdullah worry about that. He apparently calculates the Egyptians will be glad to pull out and leave him with the 220,000 Arab refugees crowding Gaza today.)

Following the approved rules of Oriental negotiation, Jordan and Israel have been exchanging their rock-bottom prices on the corridor deal and then have gone off to sulk in their respective tents till someone weakens. The Israelis know that time is pressing on them, but they are hopeful that Abdullah will eventually let them have the better part of the bargain because he needs a settlement even more than they.

As already noted, Abdullah's near-monopoly on the Holy Places makes him more vulnerable to UN attentions. Also, the General Assembly's leaning toward “municipal autonomy” for the peoples of Jerusalem is a particular threat to Abdullah; the Jews in the New City would cleave to Israel whatever happened, but the Arabs in Abdullah's sector are mostly Palestinian, with small allegiance to Jordan. Finally, the monarch sorely needs a pact with Israel to relieve his isolation from his irate fellow-members of the Arab League. (Israel is also isolated in the Arab world—but she is more used to

loneliness.) The Israel-Jordan Armistice gave Abdullah an implied recognition of his *de facto* hold on Western Palestine. An Israel-Jordan peace treaty would make this recognition explicit and give Abdullah effective *de jure* status in his new territories, at any rate in Israel's eyes.

THE British are at least as interested as Abdullah, to put it mildly, in seeing their puppet well established on Palestinian soil. Abdullah is London's creature, and anything that builds him up in Palestine builds the British up in the Middle East, where they badly need propping. Very sensibly, Garreau did not go to Abdullah's emissary when he wanted a Jordan opinion on his plan—he went to Sir Alexander Cadogan.

Cadogan, it is known, was noncommittal. He suggested that the plan should wait upon the Israel-Jordan treaty. Then both signatories could face the UN in Jerusalem together—after which, Sir Alexander suggested, the Garreau proposals might be convenient. Clearly, the British will drive as hard a Jerusalem bargain for Jordan, and indirectly for Israel, as they can. They have no hankering for an international authority that would provide a political springboard in the Middle East for the Church and even possibly facilitate the return of that “Catholic” state, France, to a region from which Britain ousted her only a few years ago.

The British line on Jerusalem is visible and unswerving. Not so the American. The activity of the two powers in Tel Aviv immediately after the Assembly's vote for internationalization was characteristic. The British Minister rushed to the Israeli Foreign Office with solid, practical advice to get on with the Jordan talks. The American Ambassador also lost no time in making a call, but merely to caution Israel not to flout the UN by open disobedience. Perfectly good advice, too, but typically negative. Such negativeness—in this case a symptom of indecision—has marked the whole unsteady course of American policy on Jerusalem.

As long ago as the Paris session of the General Assembly in late 1948, the State

Department was indicating its loss of belief in the workability of an internationalized Jerusalem. American representatives even consulted the Israelis about a tentative plan scrapping the original partition scheme for Jerusalem and setting Israeli-Jordan trusteeships over the two halves of the city. Throughout most of 1949, during the long months of the Palestine Conciliation Commission's (PCC) shadow-boxing at Lausanne, the Americans kept on assuring the Israelis that the United States definitely opposed internationalization. Even in the fairly acrimonious Washington letters to Tel Aviv complaining about intransigence on Arab refugees and other matters, Jerusalem was not disputed. Washington apparently understood Israel's determination not to yield her portion of the Holy City, and even seemed to sympathize.

It was a bit startling, therefore, when the PCC, composed of France, Turkey, and the United States, nevertheless came forth with a recommendation to the Assembly last fall to internationalize no less than some one hundred square miles in and around Jerusalem, permanently demilitarizing the area and banning mass immigration into it.

Israel (and Jordan) yelled bloody murder. Washington looked unaccountably surprised, as if Tel Aviv's reaction were quite novel. The Americans immediately retreated. They—and then the French and the Turks—hastened to say that it was all a misunderstanding, that the PCC really meant to leave Jerusalem's political jurisdiction to Israel and Jordan. The PCC itself took the curious step of issuing a formal "clarification" to that effect, though this hardly squared with the original text. But by this time the Arab-Soviet-Vatican chase was in full cry for much sterner arrangements. Whereupon the Americans overnight started opposing internationalization all over again, suddenly rediscovering that no plan would work unless the people in Jerusalem accepted it—a simple truth which would have avoided much confusion if the United States had consistently expounded it from the beginning.

Despite this renewed clarity of vision, the

United States made no effort to lobby against the impractical Australian plan, merely speaking and voting against it as a single member of the Assembly. It is only now, through its commanding position on the Trusteeship Council and its emphasis on prior Israel-Jordan acceptance of *any* plan, that the United States may at last contribute to a statesmanlike settlement.

It may be safely assumed that, deep down, Washington is genuinely averse to international zones. We have had unhappy experiences with them: Danzig in the past, for instance, and Trieste currently. An international Jerusalem would inevitably involve the United States in special obligations, as the likeliest provider of protection and financial support; it would open a troublesome loophole for Soviet meddling; it would annoy Britain, whom the United States has no desire to annoy on this point.

Why, then, our vacillating policy? Unless it was just plain ineptness, the obvious answer is probably nearest to the correct one: that there are, after all, twenty-five million Catholics in this country—a formidable consideration, especially in an election year. Seen in this light, one commences to fathom American maneuvers as a gradual retreat from internationalization while sedulously avoiding a position of leadership in resistance to the Church. Such an interpretation clarifies our policy even now: Washington wants Israel and Jordan to get together, but is simultaneously urging Israel to reach some kind of accommodation with the Vatican.

THE VATICAN thus holds the key. Insofar as it is presently showing signs of its traditional genius for realism and compromise, prospects of a settlement look bright. That settlement—of the single most complex emotional issue in the world today—will not only be a triumph of reasonableness. It will administer a solid setback to those two agents of confusion and entanglement in the Jerusalem crisis: the Arabs and the Russians.

As the UN's chief Lebanese delegate admitted, his bloc would have hailed the Assembly resolution even if the vote could

have no practical effect in Jerusalem at all but simply gave the Arab world a "moral bolstering" and the Israelis a notice "that there are limits to their ambitions." To accomplish this the Arab League was ready to sabotage Moslem rule over the Dome of the Rock and all the other Moslem-revered shrines in Jerusalem, incidentally cutting the throat of the League's most ambitious kinsman, Abdullah. Jerusalem was evidently not the thing at stake. The transparent Arab purpose was to set the world against Israel, and Israel against the world. From such a conflict the Arabs could derive enhanced prestige and good will as the Israeli supply of these commodities dwindled. They could employ the UN to greater and greater effect as a rostrum for their general lamentations over Israeli iniquity. And they could, under cover of their rhetoric and the universal din, labor more speedily in preparation for their "second round" with the Jewish state. A defeat of these intentions by a rational solution of the Jerusalem dispute will be welcome to all who hope for Middle East peace.

The bringing of sweet reason to the muddle over Jerusalem will also frustrate the designs of the USSR. It is commonly but, I think, erroneously supposed that the Kremlin's major interest in internationalizing the Holy City is to obtain entry into the Middle East through a door obligingly held open by the UN. As a matter of fact, the Soviets have only one vote—and no veto—in the Trusteeship Council, and the chances of infiltrating Soviet agents disguised as UN personnel would be remarkably slim under the close scrutiny such personnel would be sure to receive. The nuisance value of the Russian Orthodox Metropolitan in Jerusalem would be only slightly greater in a UN-ruled city than it already is, thanks to Israel's great haste to concede Soviet ownership of Russian religious properties acquired in the days of the Czars. The truth is that the Soviets, like the Arabs, are not interested in internationalization for its own sake but for its negative possibilities.

UN sovereignty in Jerusalem would damage the British by weakening Abdullah—a

result that many good people might applaud if only it did not also weaken Israel too at this juncture and serve Soviet purposes in the larger arena of a divided world. Perhaps even more important, an unworkable UN apparatus imposed on Jerusalem would create unrest and dissension. The very fact that internationalization is impractical makes it attractive to Moscow, because any attempt to enforce it could only mean trouble—and trouble in areas dominated by Western "fascist-imperialists" is manna for Kremlin intriguers. The wings of peace fanning gently over a Jerusalem amicably governed in its respective areas by Jews, Arabs, and keepers of the Holy Places will soothe any troubled waters in which the Soviets may be hoping to fish.

AT ALL events, whatever the decision on Jerusalem, the USSR has lost heavy credits in Israel by its unprincipled alliance with the Vatican and the Arab League.

Even earlier, the anti-emigration and Zionist-baiting policies of the Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe had seriously disturbed Israel's balance in her tightrope walk of neutrality between East and West. Press and parliament were becoming more and more outspoken in their blasts against Moscow, and the Prime Minister, goaded by Ana Pauker's slamming of the border in the face of Rumanian Jews yearning for Israel, had indulged himself publicly in a Churchillian reference to "the rabbi's daughter who refuses to let our people go."

The cynical Soviet performance on Jerusalem, however, has hammered the last nail into the coffin of Israel's neutrality. Even the three noisy Communists in the Knesset were reduced to stammers in their feeble apologetics for the Kremlin. The mass of the country, parliament, and government has lost its last illusions about the need or efficacy of the neutrality fiction. Instead of promoting its cause in the Middle East by sowing unrest in Jerusalem, the USSR has planted hatred for itself in Israel and in all likelihood has dealt itself a minor but potentially aching knock on the head in the global cold war.